

The Sunshine Coast Daily

Tragedy warning

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By Sam Bengier

ITS ONLY a matter of time before someone drowns at a Sunshine Coast beach, according to lifesavers.

Sunshine Coast Surf Life Saving duty officer Dave McLean said people continued to ignore beach safety messages, with more than 40 people rescued on Coast beaches during the weekend.

Twenty-seven were rescued on Saturday, including 10 people who were caught in a flash rip at Mudjimba after a sandbank collapsed.

While those swimmers were doing the right thing and swimming between the flags, Mr McLean said too many beachgoers were still flouting the rules.

A further 19 people were rescued on beaches yesterday, including five people who got into trouble while trying to swim from Bribie Island to Bulcock beach at Caloundra.

Three people were hospitalised, including a 14-year-old boy taken from a beach at Kawana with suspected spinal injuries and a seven-year-old child who was suffering convulsions at a Bribie Island beach.

Because its hotter outside, there are a lot of people on the beaches but hundreds of them are not between the flags which is obviously a recipe for disaster, Mr McLean said.

There are a lot of large rips out there and while some areas may look like nice swimming holes from a distance, they will pull you in and youll be gone in no time.

If people dont swim between the flags theyre putting their own lives at risk.

If we cant see them, we cant save them.

Last year we had three drownings and this year weve been fortunate not to have one, but if people dont take our advice, there will definitely be another fatality.

He said two hours either side of low tide was a dangerous time to be swimming, and it was similar during the turning of the tide.

The most dangerous were the open beaches, including Kawana, Mudjimba, Peregian and Sunshine Beach, and the recent big swells had added to the dangerous conditions for swimmers.

Early mornings and after 3pm were usually the most dangerous times to swim and he warned people not to swim alone, at dawn or dusk, or near rivermouths.

People should also obey directions given by lifesavers or lifeguards and monitor their position in the water, he said.

Lifesavers will patrol for extended hours over the Easter holidays, from 7am to 5.30pm.